



CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

Approved by: Finance & Premises Portfolio[] **Date:** [6 May 2021]

Last reviewed on: [July 2017]

Next review due by: [July 2022]

Dissemination of the Policy: All staff and Governors, School Website

History of policy changes

Date	Version	Change	Origin of change e.g. change in legislation, request by TU	Changed by

CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY AND PROCEDURES

1. Rationale: What is a Critical Incident?

An event or events, usually sudden, which involve the experience of significant personal distress to a level which potentially overwhelms normal responses, procedures, and coping with strategies and which is likely to have emotional and organisation consequences.

Examples In school:

- The death of a student or a member of staff through natural causes, such as illness
- A traffic accident involving a student or a member of staff
- A deliberate act of violence, such as knifing or the use of a firearm
- A school fire or an explosion in a laboratory

Examples out of school:

- Deaths or injuries on school journeys
- Tragedies involving children from many schools
- Civil disturbances
- Capture, wounding or death of an individual or several parents involved in active service

2. Aims and objectives

The purpose of the Critical Incident Policy is to;

- Ensure that swift and appropriate action is taken the moment the school is made aware that a critical incident has occurred.
- To provide accurate information effectively to staff, students, parents, governors and the LA
- To offer sensitive, non-intrusive support in the short and medium term to all those affected directly or indirectly by what has happened.
- To maintain, as far as possible, the normal routines of school life
- To offer a secure framework of continuities to all students, staff, parents and the wider community

3. Background, roles and responsibilities

The following guidance notes are to help the school manage a critical incident. Not all of the actions described will be needed. The Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) will decide how much of what follows will be followed when they have their first briefing meeting as described below. A second assumption in this advice is that the school is in session. If the critical incident occurs outside school hours, the Principal (or the delegated member of the executive) will decide how much of what follows should be implemented. There is an assumption that the appropriate emergency services have been called as necessary.

The Critical Incident Management Team

Role	Name	Contact No
Team Leader	Richard Gilpin	01242 579494 07875 245442
Staff Liaison	Penny Kavanagh/ Amanda Peck	07738 238828 07719 533124
Student Liaison	Martin Watkins	01242 680007 07394 567630
Parent and Community Liaison	David Eagleton	07764 945783
Police Liaison	Richard Gilpin	01242 579494 07875 245442
Media Liaison/Social Media Monitoring	Richard Gilpin	01242 579494 07875 245442
Administrator	Linda Ferrabee	07786 552696

Gloucestershire LA

- Provide officers to support the school;
- Call upon services of other departments of the County Council;
- Help in planning for a return to normal after the incident, including advice about grief and bereavement issues, care, counselling and practical support.

The Emergency Response Team at County can be contacted 24 hours 01452 427171.

Gloucestershire LA Media Unit will:

- Co-ordinate all approaches from radio, television and newspapers and liaise with Pittville School to ensure that the media have the correct information. The Media Unit will:
 - o Keep the media informed with details of known and confirmed facts via press releases/media briefings
 - o Arrange media briefings away from the school site to try and keep them away from the actual incident
 - o Arrange limited access to the school site should that be deemed appropriate
 - o Arrange interviews with appropriate spokesperson for the LA/School
 - o Handle all enquiries on behalf of the LA and Pittville School.

The Communications Manager may be contacted during office hours on 01452 328001.

The Critical Incident Management Team will:

- Meet daily to share information and plan the next stage of the response.

Critical Incident Actions

Actions: First Day	Notes
<p>Assess the situation and provide appropriate immediate emergency response</p>	<p>When an incident takes place on or beside school premises an immediate emergency response may involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensuring immediate safety of individuals • contacting emergency services • administering first aid
<p>By WHOM? RG</p>	
<p>Gather and record accurate information</p> <p>What has happened? Who was involved? When did it happen? How did it happen?</p>	<p>It is important to establish the facts otherwise rumours may take over and add to the distress of those involved. This action should be started immediately but may be on-going as information may be incomplete initially.</p> <p>Specific details should include the names of everyone involved including any children/staff from other schools/settings.</p>
<p>By WHOM? LF</p>	
<p>Notify the Local Authority of Critical Incident on: 01452 427171</p>	<p>Schools should inform the Local Authority where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • events challenge the internal coping mechanisms within the organisation • events have wider implications e.g. a high media profile <p>If a tragic incident occurs that can be managed from within internal resources there is no requirement to notify the LA however schools may wish to call to discuss the event and their actions.</p>
<p>By WHOM? LF</p>	
<p>Contact school governors and outside agencies</p>	<p>This is facilitated by recording contact numbers in advance on Emergency Contact List (see appendix 1).</p>
<p>By WHOM? LF</p>	

<p>Convene a meeting to brief the Critical Incident Management Team to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief the team • Make specific plans • Delegate specific roles and responsibilities 	<p>Depending on the incident it may be advisable to meet the evening before or early in the morning to ensure a plan is in place for the school day. At this meeting determine what information is to be shared beyond the group and with whom (this may involve liaison with the family).</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Control Centre</td> <td>Richard Gilpin's office</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Reserve</td> <td>Room 29</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Off site reserve</td> <td>The Royal Oak 522344</td> </tr> </table>	Control Centre	Richard Gilpin's office	Reserve	Room 29	Off site reserve	The Royal Oak 522344
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<p>By WHOM? RG</p>							
<p>Ensure a dedicated emergency telephone line is operational:</p>	<p>Communication is vital however lines can during a CI telephone lines can quickly become overwhelmed.</p>						
<p>By WHOM? APk</p>							
<p>Alert Local Authority press office 01452 328001</p>	<p>Many incidents may cause media interest; the press office can give advice and support about the preparation of an official statement. Individual staff and students should be strongly discouraged from talking to the media as partial information, speculation and personal opinion can cause significant distress to families, especially when inaccurately reported; this is also true of information posted on social networking sites.</p>						
<p>By WHOM? RG</p>							
<p>Compile a list of vulnerable students and adults</p>	<p>Identify and monitor vulnerable individuals (students and staff), plan additional support from adults or peers. Staff can be reminded that their colleagues may need some additional support such as a phone call later that evening. For further information see appendix 2</p>						
<p>By WHOM? EB/APk</p>							

<p>Establish procedure for informing/briefing staff to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform about the incident • Discuss plans for the day • Discuss how best to support students and each other • Make plans for further information to be disseminated as it becomes available 	<p>It is important that all staff receive accurate facts and are kept updated. This may require two separate groups to allow supervision of students. Staff who are likely to be particularly affected may need separate arrangements. Arrangements may need to be made for staff who are not present on the day to be informed. The meeting would normally be led by the head teacher or senior member of staff. It may be helpful for an EP, a member of the clergy or a police officer to have some input to this meeting. Staff should be given advice and share ideas on how best to support students during this time (see appendix 3).</p>
<p>By WHOM? RG</p>	
<p>Establish procedure for informing students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In groups • In a familiar environment • By people they know and trust 	<p>Whole school announcements should be avoided. Students should be informed in class or tutor groups by people they know and trust. Outside professionals can provide advice and support to staff where needed. Students who are likely to be particularly affected (e.g. close friends of a deceased pupil) should be told separately first. For further information see appendix 4.</p>
<p>By WHOM? MW</p>	
<p>Plan to re-establish routines and keep the structure of the day as regular as possible</p> <p>BUT</p> <p>Build in adjustments to explicitly acknowledge the incident:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whole school activities • class/tutor group activities • rituals 	<p>Re-establishing routines restores predictability and normality which promotes a sense of safety.</p> <p>The capacity of pupils and staff to face additional challenges is reduced so the principle should be to keep busy with low stress work (avoid new subjects and tests).</p> <p>It is important to formally acknowledge the event particularly when it involves a bereavement affecting many in the school community. Whole school assemblies must be treated with caution to avoid hysteria however it would not be appropriate to continue as if nothing had happened. Where impact is severe classes may need to engage in alternative sessions (eg letters, poems or artwork for book of remembrance).</p>

By WHOM? MW/RG	
Arrange room and staffing to provide opportunities for individuals who are overwhelmed to express feelings in a safe, supportive environment	<p>Designate room(s) and equip with drinks, tissues, art equipment, appropriate literature</p> <p>Agree staff to cover. Support for pupils should come from staff or other familiar adults with whom the students already. EPs may be involved in this support however they are there to support, not take over from, staff.</p>
By WHOM? PK/APk	
<p>Contact bereaved/affected families to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ascertain the family's wishes • Express sympathy/condolences • Plan further contact/actions 	<p>Contact should be made with family or families within the school community who are directly affected by the incident within 24 hours if possible.</p> <p>The nature of the contact should be guided by the wishes of the family although it may involve a home visit by staff representatives to extend sympathy.</p> <p>In some cases it may involve planning for return to school of injured/bereaved children.</p>
By WHOM? RG	
<p>Establish a procedure for informing parents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By letter • In a meeting 	<p>Depending on the nature and timing of events parents may already be aware of the incident. An appropriate letter should be compiled to be sent home with pupils. In certain circumstances staff may decide to hold a parent meeting, either at the end of school or in the evening, to cover issues in more depth and allow questions to be raised. It may be appropriate to involve outside agencies, such as the police, clergy or EPs. For further guidance, including sample letter, see Appendix 5</p>
By WHOM? RG	
Arrange for staff to meet at the end of the day to debrief and plan for following day	<p>After an emotionally exhausting day it is important for staff to meet for a short session, for an update and to share plans, as talking things through with others provides an opportunity for peer support.</p>

Further Actions: Day 2 onwards	Notes
<p>Convene a meeting of Critical Incident Management Team to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consider any new developments • review actions and events to date • plan for the day • identify future tasks/ assign roles 	<p>Sometimes the first day appears quite calm as people may be in shock. Day 2 can present more issues as events begin to sink in so it is important to meet each day until the school returns to normal functioning.</p> <p>Adjustments should be reviewed on a daily basis and the balance between providing support for as long as required and returning to normal given careful consideration.</p>
By WHOM? RG	
<p>Convene a meeting for staff to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • update staff on any new developments • inform staff of plans for the day • give staff an opportunity to ask questions and raise concerns 	<p>In major critical incidents staff should be brought together at the start of the following day. As well as practical purposes this gives emotional support in difficult circumstances and allows a reminder that both staff and students may need some nurturing and time to talk. Plans should be made for subsequent meetings as required.</p>
By WHOM? RG	
<p>Liaise with affected family including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • visits by staff or pupils to injured or bereaved • family's wishes and plans regarding funeral arrangements • return to school of injured or bereaved 	<p>Contacts/visits should be planned/ made to anyone injured, either at home or in hospital, with cards and get well messages from staff and students.</p> <p>In cases of bereavement there may be possessions to be returned to the family and timing of this should be carefully planned.</p>
By WHOM? RG	
<p>Continue to monitor and provide additional support to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vulnerable individuals previously identified • other students (or staff) causing concern 	<p>Following a Critical Incident a level of shock, anxiety and distress is normal, especially amongst those closest to the incident.</p> <p>Most people will have returned to normal functioning within six to eight weeks. Further support may be required for individuals continuing to show significant signs of distress beyond this.</p>
By WHOM? EB/APK	

<p>Begin to plan school response to memorial to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the wishes of the family • active involvement of the peers and friends of the deceased 	<p>A lasting memorial and/or a ceremony give an important message about the value of the deceased; offers comfort to friends and family and may provide a sense of closure.</p>
<p>By WHOM? RG</p>	

Follow up and Long Term Actions	Notes
Review Critical Incident response and amend plan	Once the school has returned to normal functioning it is important to reflect on the response to the incident including what went well and what lessons can be learned. This can be used to evaluate and amend the Critical Incident Management Plan.
By Whom? RG	
Make a note in the school calendar of important dates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • anniversary of incident • birthday of deceased • inquests or court cases • events in which the deceased would have played a part 	The anniversary of a Critical Incident can trigger emotional responses and the school may wish, in consultation with the family, to acknowledge and commemorate the date.
By WHOM? LF	

Appendix 1

Emergency Contact List

The Emergency Contact List should be collated in advance and kept with the booklet in an accessible location.

Agency	Name	Contact Number
Chair of Governors	Mr A White	07375 640772
Clerk to the Governors	Mrs E Bennett	07770 880060
Police	Non-Emergency Emergency	101 999
School Nurse	Jackie Dixson	0300 4216597
Educational Psychologist	Sarah Gothard sarah.gothard@inpsych.biz	01452 328771 07801 854093
School Counsellor	Sally Holliday	07786 042403
CYPS	Helpline	01242 634050
Social Services	Helpline	01242 532500
GCC Schools' Emergency Response Team (manned 24 hours by duty officer)	Helpline	01452 427171
Safeguarding	Duty Desk	01452 426565

SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS



Pittville School
Cheltenham

Albert Road, Cheltenham, GL52 3JD

telephone 01242 524787

fax 01242 228750

email achieve@pittville.gloucs.sch.uk

website www.pittville.gloucs.sch.uk

Headteacher Richard Gilpin

Dear Parents/Carers

The school has experienced (the sudden death/injury) to one of our students/staff. We are deeply saddened by this death/injury.

(Brief details of the incident, and in the case of death, perhaps some positive remembrances of persons lost).

We have support structures in place to help your child cope with this tragedy. *(elaborate).*

It is possible that your child may have some feelings that he may like to discuss with you. You can help your child by taking time to listen to him/her and encouraging him/her to express their feelings. It is important to give truthful information that is appropriate to his/her age.

If you would like any advice or support you may contact the following people at school:

List names

Yours faithfully

R Gilpin
Headteacher

SAMPLE LETTER REQUESTING CONSENT FOR INVOLVEMENT OF OUTSIDE PROFESSIONALS



Pittville School
Cheltenham

Albert Road, Cheltenham, GL52 3JD

telephone 01242 524787

fax 01242 228750

email achieve@pittville.gloucs.sch.uk

website www.pittville.gloucs.sch.uk

Headteacher Richard

Gilpin

Dear Parents/Carers

Following the recent (tragedy/death of x) we have arranged specialist support for students in the school who need particular help. (X) is available to help us with this work. The support will usually consist of talking to students either in small groups or on a one to one basis and offering reassurance and advise as appropriate.

You child has been identified as one of the students who would benefit from meeting with (x). If you would like them to receive this support please sign the attached permission slip and return to school by If you would like further information on the above please contact the school on the above number.

Please give your consent to this support by completing the consent form which you will find in the forms section of Edulink.

Yours faithfully

R Gilpin
Headteacher

